

□ CHAPTER SIX □

The Church *in* the Modern World: Rereading *Gaudium et Spes* After Thirty Years

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Introduction: The Significance of a Preposition

I N HIS COMMENTARY on *Gaudium et Spes*, Charles Moeller calls attention to the preposition “in” in the title of *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. Catholics, he writes, cannot follow the separation implied in World Council of Churches’ documents on “Church *and* Society,” since the very title of Vatican II’s pastoral constitution relates church and world in an intrinsic manner.¹ Moeller’s reminder notwithstanding, one sees many commentators — perhaps the majority — reading that pastoral constitution as if the little preposition “in” were not present in its title. Such commentators seem to read the document selectively, centering on either the “modern world” part of the title or the “church” part.

This paper’s thesis is that the preposition is a key to reading *Gaudium et Spes*. The thesis has a general and a specific form. More generally, I claim that centering in on that preposition can help us move beyond two false starts — the overemphasis on either church or world that I mentioned above — in our reception of *Gaudium et Spes*. More particularly, I argue here that getting beyond those false starts is crucial for Catholic moral discussions,

which have been largely paralyzed by two opposing forms of church-world dualism. In pursuing both the general and particular thesis I am only elaborating a position recently articulated by Walter Kasper:

Even today — thirty years after *Gaudium et Spes* — both the systematic development of . . . a christologically grounded and defined anthropology and the fully articulated formulation of corresponding individual and social ethics are in many respects an urgent *desideratum*. Formulated in general terms: today the reception of the Second Vatican Council is by no means behind us, but in many respects still before us.²

In the second and third sections of this article, I will argue for the general and specific forms of my thesis in positive terms. In the first section which follows, I outline the approaches I am arguing against here, approaches that tend to concentrate — I think almost exclusively — on one half of the subtitle of *Gaudium et Spes*. That is, both approaches have taken the preposition “in” out of the title of *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*.

Before any of that I pause to admit the difficulty of getting the meaning of *Gaudium et Spes* right. Already in introducing the first textual draft considered on the floor of the Council in 1964, Bishop Guano, who headed the drafting subcommission, described the great difficulty his group had in drafting the constitution: “What is difficult is to arrive at a just equilibrium between recalling the greatest principles of the Gospel — without which we would not be able to see — and an explanation of present conditions, which need to be treated in light of those principles.”³

What is Guano admitting except that the Council itself, once it decided to take up work on the church *ad extra*, was not sure how to proceed?⁴ And, in what remains perhaps the most helpful interpretation of *Gaudium et Spes*, Henri de Lubac claimed in his 1968 commentary that the document itself provides some of the seeds of its own misinterpretation:

Everything . . . in the end, was placed under the sign of the Word of God made flesh, who, “a perfect human being entered into the history of the world, assuming and recapitulating that history in himself” (*Gaudium et Spes*, par. 38). One senses here, on the part of the redactors, the concern to find a doctrinal equilibrium that will always be hard to establish perfectly. Without doubt, even the final text reflects the steps of a path strewn with stumbling stones, and the hand of many redactors who helped it along. . . . It is nonetheless necessary to be grateful to the Council for having entered into new terrain . . . without organizing a system.”⁵

So when I now reject two tendencies in the interpretation of *Gaudium et Spes*, I do not mean to imply that the document’s meaning is easy to establish.

Two Missteps on the Way to Understanding

Interpretations of *Gaudium et Spes* emphasizing its embrace of the possibilities of the modern world predominated in the heady years following the Council, a period Kasper calls the “initial phase of exuberance immediately after the Council.”⁶ One already sees this tendency to embrace the modern world and its promise in the conciliar debates themselves. In the same speech in which he asked his brother bishops to avoid another Galileo case around the issue of contraception, Cardinal Suenens issued this call: *Sequamur progressum scientiae*.⁷

Thirty years later the initial exuberance has faded, and along with it has come a gnawing sense that scientific progress has been accompanied by “man’s growing, far-reaching uncertainty regarding his own essence.”⁸ In the words of Václav Havel, “the relationship to the world that modern science fostered and shaped now appears to have exhausted its potential . . . [T]he relationship is missing something.”⁹

Still, one-sided, overly optimistic readings of *Gaudium et Spes*

reign in some quarters. Let Thomas Shannon's recent characterization of the meaning of *Gaudium et Spes* stand for the partial reading I am rejecting here:

I wish to focus on what I consider to be the most critical element in *Gaudium et Spes*: the shift from a classical to an historical perspective. . . . From my perspective, the most important sentence in *Gaudium et Spes* is in paragraph five: "Thus, the human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one."¹⁰

This interpreter, a moralist, like many others who read *Gaudium et Spes* this way, emphasizes that among the Council's major contributions was to free moral thinking from "an impersonal system of law applied abstractly to the individual to a consideration of the person and his or her acts as the moral standard."¹¹ A similar reading of *Gaudium et Spes* appears in a recent book by moralist John Gallagher, for whom the document signaled a "shift away from human nature . . . focus[ing] instead on the human person or individual."¹²

But how can this be the central meaning of *Gaudium et Spes*? Where has the church gone in this exaltation of change and individual persons? Listen again to Kasper: "The church today is among the few remaining providers of meaning in our society. For a secularized and pluralistic society cannot give itself any final grounding."¹³ My claim is that Shannon's interpretation represents a first failure to keep the preposition "in" in the title of *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*.

But it is certainly not the only, nor perhaps the most pressing of the one-sided interpretations of *Gaudium et Spes*. There is another, perhaps more subtle partial reading of the document that begins from the recognition of the limits of a full embrace of the modern world. This partial reading would take the "in" out of the *Pastoral Constitution* and leave us, I think, as a church very much *outside* the modern world.

I see such a partial reading of *Gaudium et Spes* in the recent *America* magazine article "The American Church in Jeopardy,"

by Martin Tripole. The author takes issue with Avery Dulles's suggestion that *Gaudium et Spes* called for "a completely new understanding of the relationship between the church and the world." Tripole warns:

A problem begins to occur, however, when, according to some who adopt this new way of thinking, the service (of the church to the world) is to the temporal needs of others. . . . As a result, we no longer have provided people with a valid reason for concern for the communal, liturgical and sacramental life of the church. . . . Our church is falling apart. For the sake of our commitment to less noble factional causes, we are sapping the life blood of the church. Only if we unite in a faith community in and with the Lord, will God's purposes in his church be served. Immediate action is necessary, if we care about the church's survival.¹⁴

Tripole's call for "immediate action" is the unspecified and ominous concluding sentence of his article. Does he mean that the church should withdraw from serving the "temporal needs" of the people in the world? If so, his article is an overreaction, one beginning to take form in our day, that, while finding the central meaning of *Gaudium et Spes* to be almost the opposite of that proposed by Shannon, will turn out to be just as incomplete. Taking the church out of the modern world cannot be the direction indicated by *Gaudium et Spes*.

Again, it is Kasper who provides the needed response:

Unfortunately, in the last twenty-five years the many energies for the internal renewal of the church were as often absorbed by internal trench-fighting. In fact, most of these internal fights are of very little interest to the majority of humanity. They are the more or less esoteric concerns of insiders. The majority of human beings have other

and more pressing concerns. In fact, while the house burns blazing, we fight about which picture frames should be dusted first, by whom, and how. We forget that the church is not there for itself. It is a sacrament for the salvation of the world.¹⁵

It was Moeller who first noted the importance of the preposition “in” in the title of the *Pastoral Constitution*. As we try to decipher the document’s significance many years later, let us begin by refusing to ignore that preposition and either the church or the modern world which it attempts to link.

The Twofold Meaning of *Gaudium et Spes*

Even though he finds “stumbling stones” in the road to interpreting *Gaudium et Spes*, Henri de Lubac suggests a way toward a less partial reading of the pastoral constitution. De Lubac suggests that the two parts of *Gaudium et Spes* complement each other: part one begins on modernity’s terms and claims that we modern human beings, on our own terms, cannot avoid admitting our dependence on God; part two begins on the church’s terms and claims the church, again on its own terms, cannot avoid engaging with all human beings in responding to the world’s urgent problems:

And so arise the two great interconnected but inverse problems involved in these two parts of the Constitution . . . On the one hand, it is our task to justify, from the starting point of human reality, the obligation that binds man to direct his path, within the liberty of his personal life, toward that divine end that Jesus Christ reveals and promises to him through the mediation of his Church. Or again, in echo of the words that open the Constitution: from the starting point of the joys and hopes, but also of the sorrows and agonies of contemporary man, it will be necessary to remind him of an anxiety infinitely more

profound, but also of a promise infinitely more grandiose than all the anxieties and all the promises of the time in which he lives. . . . The goal of this task is to lead man, so often absorbed by the multiplicity of worries and problems that he daily encounters in the structure of his earthly life, to ask himself about the entirety of his being.

On the other hand, once this great problem — which is undeniably the problem of man and the problem of God — is considered resolved, it will still be necessary to begin from the starting point of faith itself, and to justify rationally the interest that the Christian nonetheless attaches to the contingent realities of this world.

Two interrelated problems. . . . [First, the theologian] will start to demonstrate to the unbeliever that he cannot avoid the problem of his final destiny. . . . [Second, she] will have to show that the Christian vocation is the final reason — and the only fully satisfying one of the “earthly activity” (par. 34) of man.¹⁶

For de Lubac, *Gaudium et Spes* moves beyond its partial interpretations by insisting that neither church nor world has meaning except in its link to the other. Pope Paul VI had put the issue this way: “The split between the gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time.”¹⁷ My thesis is that de Lubac here shows us a way beyond any approaches to interpreting *Gaudium et Spes* that retain the “split” spoken of by Paul VI.

To Shannon and all who are concerned about “individual persons,” de Lubac says *Gaudium et Spes* accepts such persons as the starting point of discussion. Then it shows that what such persons have most in common is their need for God: what we need most is the way beyond our individuality that only faith provides. But to Tripole and others who move quickly to emphasize Christ’s church as the place providing the needed move beyond themselves for modern individuals, de Lubac will also have a response. And it is the quickness of the move to Christology that needs questioning.

Such quick moves to Christology are made often enough. For example, one seems to be made by David Schindler in his recent article on the pastoral constitution. He advocates a reading of the document through the lens of what he calls an "ontological" and not merely "moral" Christocentrism, an approach that "insists that a re-centering in Jesus Christ makes a difference already in the original content of man's imaging of God."¹⁸

But *Gaudium et Spes* recognizes a different, more ambiguous "original content": the "joys and the hopes, the grief and the anguish of the people of our time" are the starting point for and necessary orientation of the church's concerns. The move to a christological response, while necessary, is made less quickly in *Gaudium et Spes* than Schindler seems to recognize. Let another affirmation by Walter Kasper stand as a further specification of the less partial interpretation de Lubac is calling for:

The premise of christology is a relatively independent anthropology. In this sense theology should adopt a *positive* attitude to the modern turn to anthropology and the modern notion of autonomy. But christology is also *critical* of particular anthropological schemes, whether they be theoretical or practically lived; and it points to the fundamental problem which the anthropological approach leads to. It therefore *outbids* anthropology. . . . The relationship between christology and anthropology can be more closely defined in three ways: as an affirmation of everything that is right, true, good and lovely about human beings; as a prophetic criticism of all forms of alienation in human beings; and finally as the creative surpassing of everything that is possible in purely human terms, and thus as the completion and fulfillment of human beings in God.¹⁹

So it is not that the Christological center of *Gaudium et Spes* is in doubt. Kasper even claims that paragraph twenty-two's

opening sentence, which follows here, is the central affirmation of the constitution: "In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of humanity truly becomes clear."²⁰ It is just that *Gaudium et Spes* works its way to this central affirmation in a less aprioristic way. Tripole's and Schindler's christological focus forgets to start on modernity's anthropological turf: it does not keep the church *in* the modern world. Shannon's anthropological focus forgets to move beyond modernity's paralyzed anxiety in the face of death;²¹ it forgets to keep the modern world *in* some context that can give it a reason to go on.

Thus, it is by means of a christological move, but one come to "from below," that *Gaudium et Spes* kept the church *in* the modern world. We will return to the question of Christology at the end of this paper. For now it is enough to say that it is by means of such a Christology that the pastoral constitution emphasizes the preposition this paper is seeking to highlight.

Four Moral Theological Implications

Immediately after claiming that in *Gaudium et Spes* anthropology is taken up into and outbid by christology, Kasper adds that "an individual and social ethic based on the Christian viewpoint is an urgent requirement."²² In this section of the paper I ask about the implications for moral theology of the decision of *Gaudium et Spes* to keep the church *in* the modern world. We already saw that Kasper thinks we are just now able to begin working on this "urgent *desideratum*." So from the start I wish to be clear that what follows should be read not as a road map for the revision of moral theology but as a hope-filled extension and application of *Gaudium et Spes* to a very urgent task before us.

What is evidently needed is an understanding of morality as spirituality, a spirituality that arises from the natural desire for happiness that is built into all human beings. Servais Pinckaers summarizes the connection between morality and spirituality in this way: "The spontaneous, universal desire that receives an unhopèd-for answer lifts human hope to its highest pitch."²³ What follows are four ideas, already arising in *Gaudium et Spes*, for a morality that would lift human hope to its highest pitch.

a. Catholic morality will be a natural law morality, and it will not be like preconiliar natural law moralities.

A first moral theological implication of keeping the “in” in *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* is that “the idea of natural law ought to be creatively renewed.”²⁴ If one partial reading of *Gaudium et Spes* calls for a “shift away” from natural law morality, then another such partial reading of the document could legitimize a return to an only seemingly objective natural law. Certainly we need no “immediate action” to reestablish an inadequately thought through natural law:

The problem which many have found with the version of natural law which dominated Roman Catholic morality was that the whole person was not kept in view: certain aspects seemed to be given a significance and prominence out of relation to the total person. The ongoing task, of course, is to understand what it means to be a person, to discover what are the lines of human wholeness, what humanizes, what are genuine human goods. But we should not expect to be able to prove that a piece of behavior is inhuman and therefore immoral as clearly as we can prove something in the natural sciences. It is not something that can be easily “read off” from a definition of human nature.²⁵

Keeping church and world together in reading *Gaudium et Spes* will result in a very different form of natural law morality than is described above. First, such a morality will acknowledge the church’s dependence on “human experience, human judgment and the relevant human sciences” in its discernment of moral norms.²⁶ There can be no other conclusion drawn from *Gaudium et Spes*, paragraph twenty-two’s confidence that the Spirit is at work in “all people of good will.”

But, second, instead of shifting away from natural law morality, a Catholic morality based in the pastoral constitution

will abandon as illusory the search for any approach that is either only for “individual persons” or is independent of faith. *Gaudium et Spes*, paragraph fifty-one, called for an objective morality whose criteria are drawn *ex natura personae eiusdemque actuum*. One can find little support for moving away from natural law there.

And with respect to the search for a natural law morality unconnected to faith, Alasdair MacIntyre reminds us that this is an illusory search: “Modern Catholic protagonists of theories of natural law have sometimes claimed that we can fully understand and obey the natural law without any knowledge of God. . . . But a knowledge of God is . . . available to us from the outset of our moral enquiry and plays a crucial part in our progress in that enquiry.”²⁷ So a first moral implication of keeping the church *in* the modern world will be in our “creative renewal” of natural law morality.

b. Catholic natural law morality will have unchanging moral norms, and they will not be focused on sexual morality.

A second moral implication of keeping the church *in* the world might be thought of in these terms: *Gaudium et Spes* has suggested a clear move beyond both moral authoritarianism and moral anarchy. That is, the pastoral constitution contains unheeded wisdom for the debates around unchangeable moral norms that have become almost intractable in our day. So, while some moralists see unchanging moral norms around every corner (especially if something lurks there) and other moralists deny the existence of any such norms, *Gaudium et Spes*, paragraph twenty-eight, is precise in its listing of “the variety of crimes . . . that poison civilization.” Unlike many moralists who call for “immediate action” to clarify church teaching in the face of the world’s secularizing influences, the pastoral constitution does not list sexual sins among those crimes, instead condemning “all offenses against life. . . all violations of the integrity of the human person . . . and all offenses against human dignity.” Unlike a second group of moralists who refer always to the complexity of individual reality, *Gaudium et Spes* is clear that there are specific forms of human behavior that always “poison civilization.”

In other words, *Gaudium et Spes* does have a list of what have become known as intrinsically evil acts. And to begin listing those actions one should not look to the area of human sexuality but to the area of direct attacks on human beings. In his own recent reversal of his previous position rejecting the existence of any intrinsically evil acts, American moralist Timothy O'Connell put it this way: "to kill the innocent directly is not to judge incorrectly within morality. Rather, it is to attack the very existence and meaning of morality."²⁸

Basing a similar position on her understanding of Thomas Aquinas's account of the fundamental inclinations of all human beings, Jean Porter has written that "the more fundamental an inclination is, the more absolute are the claims that it generates regarding respect on the part of others."²⁹ What I am claiming is that these moralists find support for their moderate position on the existence of (some) intrinsically evil moral acts in *Gaudium et Spes*.

c. Catholic natural law morality will focus on our common humanity, and will find that commonality at the interior level of virtue more than at the exterior level of norm.

A third moral implication follows from this reading of *Gaudium et Spes*, an implication that again finds a way between positions calling for either an abandonment or a restoration of "traditional" natural law morality. Where some see human individuality and uniqueness as the mark of the modern era and others want "immediate action" (also at the level of imposing more universal moral norms?), the view proposed here stresses our common humanity and does so at the level of the virtues that animate moral living from within human beings.

It is very significant that the pastoral constitution separates its normative teaching, in its part one, regarding these "criminal" actions from its teaching, in part two, regarding the "urgent problems" of our day. That is, one should read the moral teaching of the document as moving from part one's absolute prohibitions to part two's descriptions of moral excellence. In this way the constitution is following Aquinas's understanding of moral

goodness which, according to Porter, moves from the “fundamental” to the “higher” moral inclinations of human beings.³⁰

Thus, *Gaudium et Spes*, from its concern to protect individuals from direct attacks on their human dignity (in part one), moves out in successive stages from the individual person to our most global concerns: part two begins closest to the individual in its consideration of marriage, then to culture, then to economic and social life, then to national political communities, then to international peace, and finally to the establishment of a community among all nations. So the document moves out from its most fundamental concern with individual human life to its most excellent and universal concern for all life together.

And *Gaudium et Spes* also shares Aquinas’s wisdom about the limits of normative morality. Describing Aquinas, Porter writes that when it comes to matters involving not fundamental, but excellent moral goods, “Aquinas has a very sketchy treatment, providing little or no guidance when we attempt to negotiate these waters. This relative sketchiness of Aquinas’ account should be seen as an indication of his wisdom, rather than his lack of foresight. . . . One can never be just unless he also possesses the virtue of prudence.”³¹ That the second part of the pastoral constitution has almost no condemnations equivalent to those expressed in part one’s paragraph twenty-seven suggests that *Gaudium et Spes* shares this Thomistic wisdom.³²

This emphasis begins in part two of *Gaudium et Spes* with paragraph fifty-one’s linking of the virtue of “conjugal chastity” to the possibility of even knowing what the *integrum sensum* of marriage is.³³ The rereading of *Gaudium et Spes* I am proposing supports Herbert McCabe’s understanding of a helpful method for moral theology: “You cannot fit the virtues into a legal structure without reducing them to disposition to follow the rules. You can, however, fit law and obedience to law into a comfortable, though minor, niche in the project of growing up in the rich and variegated life of virtues.”³⁴ Part two of *Gaudium et Spes* opens the way to a rethinking of Catholic morality as beginning from a few absolute prohibitions and moving toward a morality of virtue.

d. Catholic natural law morality, situated in the communio of virtue, will integrate concerns for subsidiarity with concerns for the common good.

A last element of a Catholic morality that keeps the church *in* the world will be that morality's ability to integrate the inevitable tensions between concerns for subsidiarity and for the common good. A Catholic morality-as-spirituality will emphasize our human capacity for truth as a capacity to join others in searching for the truth. If, as Josef Ratzinger claims, paragraph sixteen on conscience is the *leitmotiv* of the pastoral constitution,³⁵ then that paragraph's description of how conscience functions is central to any adequate moral theology:

By conscience, in a wonderful way, that law is made known which is fulfilled in the love of God and of one's neighbor. Through loyalty to conscience Christians are joined to others in the search for truth and for the right solution to so many moral problems which arise both in the life of individuals and from social relationships.³⁶

If God's call in conscience is the possibility of our setting out on the moral life in the first place, then communities of virtue are the possibility of our continuing on our way to discern our particular moral obligations. Norbert Rigali insists that all virtue is gained communally:

One can ask whether there has not been a tendency in past theology to understand freedom and moral responsibility themselves in an individualistically distorted way. . . . If the radically social doctrine of the Communion of the Saints were less theologically neglected and underdeveloped, it would perhaps be more apparent that the church must safeguard its teaching on personal freedom and moral responsibility not only against a doctrine reducing evil to social

systems, institutions, or collectives but also against an individualistically distorted view of freedom and responsibility.³⁷

Contemporary Catholic morality probably underemphasizes the particularly ecclesial function that the magisterium plays in this regard. Should not the magisterium remind all of us that we will be divorced from the fundamental desires of our hearts unless we are being transformed within the *communio sanctorum*? That only as members of those being transformed by our communion in the holy things of God, do we have a ghost of a chance of finding a correct interpretation of our experience, of knowing and doing our moral obligations? Again it is Kasper who gets the theological significance right here:

Communio is not something we make or are even able to produce. What is meant is much more the community and the reconciliation with God that was opened to us in Jesus Christ, and through the preaching of the word of God is made present to us now. The classically Catholic term *communio sanctorum* did not in its origins mean the community of the holy ones, but community in the holy, a common participation in the holy things.³⁸

Could we not say that a confidence derived from our participation in the “holy things” of God enabled *Gaudium et Spes* to call the church to dialogue with the world in the expectation of learning from the world? As Yves Congar put it: “The Church has probably . . . never before acknowledged so plainly that it too receives from the world (as it readily admits in chapter four of part one of *Gaudium et Spes*).”³⁹

It is only inclusive communities of virtue that can equip persons for the task that *Gaudium et Spes* enjoins to us: our humanization as persons through our divinization. And this, perhaps the most challenging moral implication of all in our reading of *Gaudium et Spes*, is simply another instance of the Thomistic spirit of the document. The way Aquinas put it is that

“the higher one’s degree of goodness, the more universal is one’s desire for good. Imperfect things extend no further than their own individual good. God, who is most perfect in good, is the good of all being.”⁴⁰ The way *Gaudium et Spes* puts it is that the church can only be the church *in* the modern world.

Conclusion

Ultimately the way *Gaudium et Spes* keeps the church *in* the world is by helping both church and world come to a deeper understanding of their own meaning. So the pastoral constitution corrects any myopic focus on either church or world by attending to both, but settling elsewhere, on the truth that is Jesus Christ and will be fully ours in the world to come. *Gaudium et Spes* thus affirms that human beings will always be revising what we know to be true. Cardinal Colombo put the point best in a work written just a year after the Council:

The actual course of the Council can show how the Church understands that possession of truth which constitutes its essence. The conciliar debates, which have lasted four long years and have sometimes been marked by very sharp contrasts, unmistakably show that the possession of truth in the Church is not something dead, rigid, static, not a reason for comfortable repose, but a ceaseless, inexhaustible search, struggle and endeavor for renewal. . . . To describe this relation (between Church and truth) we might perhaps with profit modify the formula which has led to the erroneous opinion that the Church represents a dogmatism hostile to culture. Instead of repeating perpetually that the Church is in possession of the truth, we should say that the Church is possessed by the truth. . . . Growth in knowledge and love of truth is the basis and inner law of the continued existence of the Church in time. The day on which this growth reached its

utmost limit would, according to the Church's firm conviction, be the last day of history.⁴¹

To take such a stance on the meaning of *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* is simply to honor the preposition "in." It is to follow the way of incarnation, God's honoring of the world by taking flesh in it and assuming it into God's own Son's life, death, and resurrection. To keep the church *in* the world is to keep our eyes on Christ. It is to do what Paul VI asked of the Council Fathers in his own speech inaugurating the second session of the Council: "Where does our path start? What course should it follow? What goal must be set? Three essential questions, in all simplicity. There is only a single answer to them. . . . Christ. Christ our principle; Christ our way and our leader; Christ our hope and our goal."⁴²

We will keep our eyes on Christ if we refuse to overfocus our gaze on either the church in its present form or on the changing world. This is a difficult, but not a partial strategy of interpretation; and it is a difficult, but not a partial way of life. It is also the strategy that *Gaudium et Spes* took to keep the church *in* the modern world.

Notes

1. "The expression 'in' was retained from the first version onwards. It makes clear that it has never been a question of the Church standing opposite to and facing the world, but of presence in it. . . . Right from the start it was never a matter of two opposed realities. Theologically, that is not something to be taken for granted as a matter of course, for at the time the view of the World Council of Churches, for example, was rather that of an opposition . . . 'Church and Society.' " Moeller, "History of the Constitution," in Vorgrimler, ed. *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 5 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 81.

2. Kasper, "The Theological Anthropology of *Gaudium et Spes*," *Communio* 22 (spring 1996): 140.

3. "Difficile insuper est invenire iustum aequilibrium inter revocationem grandium principiorum Evangelii — qua certe nos carere non posse videmur — et descriptionem et enodationem praesentium

condicionum, quae in luce horum principiorum tractandae sunt.” *Acta Synodalia Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, vol. III, pars V (Città del Vaticano: Typis Poliglottis Vaticanis, 1975) 206.

4. See Moeller’s description of “the decisive impulse” during the first session of the Council to support Cardinal Suenens’ call for two schemata on the church, one *ad intra*, the other *ad extra*. Moeller, “The History of the Constitution,” 10-12.

5. “Tout . . . est enfin placé sous le signe du Verbe de Dieu fait chair, lequel, ‘homme parfait est entré dans l’histoire du monde, l’assumant et le récapitulant en lui.’ On sent ici, de la part des rédacteurs, le souci d’assurer un équilibre doctrinal toujours difficile à établir parfaitement. Sans doute le text reflète-t-il aussi dans sa rédaction dernière les étapes d’une élaboration semée d’écueils, ainsi que la pluralité de ceux qui y ont mis le main. . . . Il faut néanmoins, redions-le, savoir gré au Concile d’avoir pénétré sur un terrain relativement neuf, où se présentaient toutes sortes de données enchevêtrées, d’avoir cherché à tenir compte de toutes, de les avoir inventoriées et ordonnées, mais sans tenter de les organiser en un système.” Henri de Lubac, *Athéisme et le sense de l’homme* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1968), 126, 129.

6. Walter Kasper, “The Council’s Vision for a Renewal of the Church.” *Communio* 17 (winter 1990): 476.

7. *Acta Synodalia, III, VI*, 58.

8. Kasper, “The Theological Anthropology of *Gaudium et Spes*,” 131.

9. Václav Havel, “Post-Modernism — The Search for Universal Laws,” in *Vital Speeches of the Day* (August 1, 1994), 613.

10. Thomas Shannon, “*Gaudium et Spes*: Its Prologue and Legacy.” *The Eighth Annual Lecture in Catholic Studies Sponsored by the Edmundite Trust Fund for Catholic Studies and Ministry at Saint Michael’s College*. Colchester, Vt.: St. Michael’s College, 1996), 1, 9.

11. Shannon, “*Gaudium et Spes*: Its Prologue and Legacy,” 16.

12. Gallagher, *Time Past, Time Future: An Historical Study of Catholic Moral Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 258.

13. “Die Kirche ist heute weithin die einzige noch verbliebene Sinninstanz in unsere Gesellschaft. Denn eine säkularisierte pluralistische Gesellschaft kann sich selbst keine Letztbegründung geben.” Kasper, *Kirche — wohin gehst du? Die bleibende Bedeutung des II. Vatikanischen Konzils* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1994), 44.

14. Tripole, “The American Church in Jeopardy,” *America* (September 28, 1996): 13, 14, 15.

15. “In den letzten 25 Jahren waren bei uns die meisten Kräfte leider für die innerkirchliche Grabenkämpfe absorbiert. Doch die meisten

Streitereien innerkirchlicher Art interessieren den Grossteil der Menschen herzlich wenig. Sie sind das mehr oder weniger esoterische Anliegen von Insidern. Die meisten Menschen haben andere und handfestere Sorgen. Doch während das Haus lichterloh brennt, streiten wir uns, welcher Bilderrahmen zuerst, von wem und wie abgestaubt werden soll. Wir vergessen, dass die Kirche nicht für sich selber da ist. Sie ist Sakrament für das Heil der Welt." Kasper, *Kirche — wohin gehst du?*, 44.

16. Henri de Lubac, "The Total Meaning of Man and of the World: Two Interrelated Problems," *Communio* 17 (1990): 614-16. This is an English translation of one brief section of de Lubac's commentary. As far as I can tell, it is the only portion of the brilliant French commentary, *Athéisme et le sens de l'homme*, available in English.

17. Pope Paul VI. *Evangelii Nuntiandi, An Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World* (1975), par. 20.

18. Schindler, "Christology and the *imago Dei*: Interpreting *Gaudium et Spes*," *Communio* 23 (1996): 172.

19. Kasper, *Theology and Church*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 92, 108.

20. See Kasper, *The Theological Anthropology of Gaudium et Spes*, 137.

21. Here is the "fundamental problem" for modern anthropology, for Kasper: "*Angst* (has become) the constitutive ground of human existence. It is not an anxiety about 'some thing,' but anxiety without object, a dread that has eaten into a freedom that has become bottomless. This dread has become the very constitution of human existence." *The Christian Meaning of Freedom and the History of Freedom in the Modern Era* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1988), 15.

22. Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 92. This claim mirrors another one by Kasper, cited above in note two.

23. Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Thomas Noble (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 311.

24. Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 53.

25. Vincent Macnamara, *Love, Law and the Christian Life* (Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier, 1989), 105.

26. Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 174. With his usual clarity Kasper outlines a threefold method for his "creatively renewed" natural law. Unlike the dualism of some principles and applications approaches to natural law, Kasper outlines a threefold process: from church principles, to norms discerned with all the relevant sciences, to individual judgments of conscience. See *Theology and Church*, 173-75.

27. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre

Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 141. *Gaudium et Spes*, par. 36 says: "Without its Creator the creature simply disappears."

28. Timothy O'Connell, *Principles for a Catholic Morality*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 1990), 210.

29. Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), 89, 144. In her newer book, Porter suggests a theoretical rationale behind this renewed natural law: "Aquinas's account of morality does offer a substantive contribution to the moral debates of our time. . . . It is worth emphasizing that the normative account that Aquinas offers is quite minimal, as far as its actual content goes. He begins with a set of very general, even banal, observations about tendencies that are ubiquitous in human life, together with a metaphysical argument that these are constitutive inclinations of human nature. . . . [He adds] more specific arguments along this line that are not always convincing. Yet a revision of Aquinas' thicker account of human nature does not affect the core of his normative account. . . . The price of this flexibility is of course a high level of generality. . . . Still, Aquinas' approach makes a real difference in practice." *Moral Actions and Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 111.

30. See Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue*, 89-90, 144.

31. Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue*, 154.

32. There are three exceptions: genocide (in par. 79) and count-population bombing as well as total war (in par. 80) are all called "crimes against God and humanity."

33. Here is how *Gaudium et Spes*, par. 51 reads on the subject: "Moralis igitur indoles rationis agendi . . . obiectivis criteriis, ex personae eiusdemque actuum natura desumptis, determinari debet, quae integrum sensum mutuae donationis ac humanae procreationis in contextu veri amoris observant; quod fieri nequit nisi virtus castitatis coniugalis sincero animo colatur." *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966): 1072. In another study I trace the long conciliar debate on this topic. See McDonough, "'New terrain' and a 'stumbling stone' in Redemptorist Contributions to *Gaudium et Spes*: On Relating and Juxtaposing Truth's Expression and Truth's Experience," *Studia Moralia* (1997, forthcoming).

34. Herbert McCabe, "Manuals and Rule Books," in *Considering Veritatis Splendor*, ed. John Wilkin (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1994), 68.

35. "(Paragraph sixteen) arrives at the essential *leitmotiv* of the whole Constitution. For if the simple voice of conscience, which discloses the whole will of God, consists in the precept of love, then what it commands is ultimately man's 'humanity' — being human in the full sense. At the same time it is clear what the content of 'humanity' actually

involved in the field of action. . . a consent to love which makes man human." Ratzinger, "Commentary on Part I, Chapter I of *Gaudium et Spes*," in Vorgrimler, ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 135.

36. *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), par. 16. It is unfortunate that this text from *Gaudium et Spes* is not cited in the recent papal encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*.

37. Norbert Rigali, "Human Solidarity and Sin in the Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliation and Penance*," *Living Light* (1986): 244.

38. Kasper recognizes the dangers of a too-easy appeal to "experience," even the experience of communities: "Entscheidendes wird davon abhängen, dass wir den ursprünglichen Sinn von *Communio* wieder besser verstehen. Primär meint *Communio* nicht ein Netz personaler Beziehungen zwischen den einzelnen Christen, einzelnen Gruppen und Gemeinden. *Communio* ist nicht etwas, was wir machen und herstellen können. Gemeint ist vielmehr die Gemeinschaft und Versöhnung mit Gott, die uns in Jesus Christ eröffnet wird, und die durch die Verkündigung des Wortes Gottes und die Feier der Sakramente gegenwärtig wird. *Communio sanctorum* bedeutet deshalb ursprünglich nicht Gemeinschaft der Heiligen, sondern Gemeinschaft des Heiligen, gemeinsame Anteilhabe an den Sancta, das heisst an den Sacramenta." Kasper, *Kirche — wohin gehst du?*, 41.

39. Yves Congar, "Part I, Chapter four," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 5, ed. Vorgrimler, 219.

40. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 24.

41. Cardinal Colombo, *Prospettiva della cultura nella luce del Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II* (1966), 27-30. Cited in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. five, ed. Vorgrimler, 284.

42. Paul VI, *Speech Opening the Second Session of the Council* (September 29, 1963).

